CLAIMS:

We claim:

1.   A method for generating animated sequences from text strings of a given language using a digital image generator said method comprising the steps of:

(a)   analyzing a given text string to determine the concept embodied in said text string;

(b)   selecting animation components corresponding to the concept chosen in step (a) from a set of animation components; and,

(c)   composing the animation components into an animation sequence to produce a final animation which is conceptually related to said text string,

whereby said animated sequence which is conceptually related to said text string is displayed to a viewer.

2.   The method of claim 1 wherein said digital image generator is a computer.

3.   The method of claim 2 wherein said step (a) of analyzing a given text string to determine the concept embodied in said text string consists of:

(d)   filtering said text string to remove any text that is not central to the message contained in said text string;

(e)   matching said filtered text with concepts by comparing said filtered message against a phrase pattern library;

(f)   replacing inappropriate concepts by examining how each concept was selected using a concept replacement library;

(g)   prioritizing concepts by weighting each concept based on a pre-assigned priority system when there are multiple concepts

13

contained in said text string to ensure that the most important

concepts are given the highest priority; and,

(h)   matching phrases with concepts by comparing them to a library of

universally understood emoticons and character combinations

when no matches are found using steps (d) through (g).

4. The method of claim 3 whereby said Phrase Pattern library in said matching step (e)

consists of a listing of phrases in said given language of said text string and concepts

corresponding with each phrase.

5. The method of claim 4 whereby said Concept Replacement Library is a listing of

concepts in said given language of said text string corresponding to specific words or phrases in

said given language.

6. The method of claim 5 whereby said Concept Replacement Library also includes a

listing of emoticons and concepts corresponding to each emoticon.

7. The method of claim 6 whereby the step of selecting animation components

corresponding to the concept chosen in step (a) consists of selecting animation components

which are conceptually linked to said text string from a library of: stories, props, backgrounds,

music and speech.

8. The method of claim 7 whereby stories contain slots in which other animation

components may be inserted.

9. The method of claim 8 whereby props comprise visual components conceptually

related to said text string which are inserted into stories.

10. The method of claim 9 whereby backgrounds comprise visual components

conceptually related to said text string used as a backdrop behind an animation to place the

animation in a particular context.

11. The method of claim 10 whereby music comprises prerecorded audio components conceptually related to said text string which are presented simultaneously with said animation sequence to place said animation sequence in a particular context.

12. The method of claim 11 whereby speech comprises prerecorded words conceptually related to said text string and presented simultaneously with said animation sequence.

13. The method of claim 12 whereby the step of composing the animation components into an animation sequence to produce a final animation which is conceptually related to said text string consists of assembling the final animation sequence from the selected animation components with an Animation Compositor.

14. A system for generating animated sequences from text strings in a given language using a digital image generator said system comprising:

    (a)   analyzing means for analyzing a given text string to determine the concept embodied in said text string;

    (b)   selecting means for selecting animation components corresponding to the concept chosen in step (a) from a set of animation components; and,

    (c)   composing means for composing the animation components into an animation sequence to produce a final animation which is conceptually related to said text string,

whereby said animated sequence which is conceptually related to said text string is displayed to a viewer.

15. The system of claim 14 wherein said analyzing means for analyzing a given text string to determine the concept embodied in said text string comprises:

(d)   filtering means for filtering said text string to remove any text that is not central to the message contained in said text string;

(e)   matching means for matching said filtered text with concepts by comparing said filtered message against a phrase pattern library;

(f)   replacing means for replacing inappropriate concepts by examining how each concept was selected;

(g)   weighting means for weighting concepts based on a pre-assigned priority system when there are multiple concepts contained in said text string to ensure that the most important concepts are given the highest priority; and,

(h)   matching means for matching phrases with concepts by comparing them to a library of universally understood emoticons and character combinations when no matches are found using steps (d) through (g).

16.   The system of claim 15 whereby the selecting means for selecting animation components corresponding to the concept chosen in analyzing means (a) from a set of animation components consists of selecting a combination of animation components which are conceptually linked to said text string from a library of; stories, props, backgrounds, music and speech.

17.   The method of claim 16 whereby said Phrase Pattern library in said matching means (e) consists of a listing of phrases in said given language of said text string and concepts corresponding to each phrase.

18. The method of claim 17 whereby said Concept Replacement Library is a listing of concepts in said given language of said text string corresponding to specific words or phrases in said given language.

19. The method of claim 18 whereby said Concept Replacement Library also includes a listing of emoticons and concepts corresponding to each emoticon.

20. The system of claim 19 whereby stories contain slots in which other animation components may be inserted.

21. The system of claim 20 whereby props comprise visual components conceptually related to said text string which are inserted into stories.

22. The system of claim 21 whereby backgrounds comprise visual components conceptually related to said text string used as a backdrop behind an animation to place the animation in a particular context.

23. The system of claim 22 whereby music comprises prerecorded audio components conceptually related to said text string which are presented simultaneously with said animation sequence to place said animation sequence in a particular context.

24. The system of claim 23 whereby speech comprises prerecorded words conceptually related to said text string and presented simultaneously with said animation sequence.

25. The system of claim 24 whereby the composing means for composing the animation components into an animation sequence to produce a final animation which is conceptually related to said text string consists of assembling the final animation sequence from the selected animation components with an Animation Compositor.

26. The system of claim 25 further comprising a computer programmed to carry out said system.